

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA**

STATE OF OKLAHOMA, ex rel.,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	05-CV-0329 GKF-PJC
	)	
TYSON FOODS, INC., et al,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

**DEFENDANTS' REPLY TO THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA'S RESPONSE TO  
MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE TESTIMONY OF DR. CHRISTOPHER TEAF**  
**(DOCKET NO. 2156)**

The undersigned Defendants submit the following *Reply* to Plaintiffs' *Response* in opposition to Defendants' *Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Dr. Christopher Teaf* ("Motion") (Docket Nos. 2156 and 2067, respectively).

## I. INTRODUCTION

Instead of attempting to respond to the arguments and authorities in Defendants' *Motion*, Plaintiffs' *Response* is more like an answer to the brief they *wish* Defendants had filed. For example, instead of attempting to respond to Defendants' arguments regarding the evidentiary limitations of tests for indicator bacteria, Plaintiffs respond to an argument the Defendants did **not** make – *i.e.*, that Defendants advocate the wholesale abandonment of the indicator bacteria paradigm. Defendants are not making this argument and no reasonable reader of Defendants' *Motion* would reach such a conclusion. Because the remainder of Plaintiffs' *Response* likewise fails to refute Defendants' demonstration that Dr. Teaf's opinions do not satisfy the reliability and relevance requirements of *Daubert*, this Court should enter an order excluding Dr. Teaf's testimony.

## II. ARGUMENT AND AUTHORITIES

### A. **Dr. Teaf's testimony should be excluded because his claimed expertise was acquired as part of this litigation, not as part of his previous education or experience as a toxicologist or risk assessor.**

Although most respondents to a motion to exclude expert witness testimony cite to legal or scientific authorities to rebut the movant's attack on the admissibility of the expert's testimony, Plaintiffs have taken the wholly unorthodox approach of having Dr. Teaf simply draft a new Declaration in which Dr. Teaf attempts to manufacture credibility for himself, and for his expert opinions. *See* Dr. Teaf's June 4, 2009 Declaration, attached as Exh. 1 to *Response*. Moreover, Plaintiffs do not merely reference Dr. Teaf's new Declaration in their *Response*, his

new Declaration is the primary support for the Plaintiffs' *Response* as the Plaintiffs cite to Dr. Teaf's new Declaration no fewer than 53 times – far more than any other cited authority.<sup>1</sup> In sum, Plaintiffs' *Response* is a circular morass of faulty reasoning based upon an entirely new Declaration from Dr. Teaf, custom-designed to respond to both legal and factual arguments in Defendants' *Motion*, and consisting of nothing more than Dr. Teaf's self-serving assertions that he thinks he really is qualified and that his opinions really are based on sound science. *See, e.g.*, Exh. 1 to *Response* at 3-5, 7, 14-18. If ever there were a classic example of hollow *ipse dixit* reasoning, Dr. Teaf's new Declaration is it.

Contrary to Plaintiffs' assertions, Defendants do not challenge Dr. Teaf's qualifications to offer expert testimony in this matter merely because he has not “focused his life's work” on “the microbial issues associated with the application of biosolids to soil.” *Response* at 6. The fact is that, prior to becoming part of the Plaintiffs' litigation expert team, Dr. Teaf had not devoted a single day of his professional life to the study of poultry, poultry litter, or activities and conditions associated with the land-application of poultry litter. Defendants have demonstrated that Dr. Teaf is not qualified to render his stated opinions in this case because Dr. Teaf candidly admits that his claimed expertise on “the topic of bacteria in poultry or poultry litter” was obtained as “a result of [his] activities in this case....” Exh. 2 to *Motion* at 180:1-7. Neither Dr. Teaf's new Declaration, nor Plaintiffs' *Response*, changes the fact that Dr. Teaf readily admits

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<sup>1</sup> Defendants have moved to strike Dr. Teaf's June 4, 2009 Declaration, as well as two other new declarations by Dr. Teaf, and several other new and untimely declarations by Plaintiffs' experts. *See* Doc. No. 2241. Defendants respectfully reiterate their request that the Court strike Dr. Teaf's untimely, new Declaration because Dr. Teaf's opinions on his own qualifications and work are irrelevant as it is the province of this Court to determine whether Dr. Teaf's proffered opinions can withstand a *Daubert* review. Although Dr. Teaf's new Declaration should be stricken from the record, with or without the new Declaration, Plaintiffs' *Response* fails to refute the legal arguments and factual demonstrations made in Defendants' *Motion* to exclude Dr. Teaf's testimony.

that he *became* an expert on poultry-related issues during this litigation – based upon his review of litigation work completed by the Plaintiffs’ multitude of experts.

**B. Plaintiffs mischaracterize Defendants’ arguments on the use of indicator bacteria because Plaintiffs cannot refute Defendants’ actual arguments.**

Throughout Plaintiffs’ *Response*, Plaintiffs repeatedly mischaracterize the nature of Defendants’ arguments on the use of indicator bacteria as a screening mechanism for regulatory agencies. However, so that the record on this matter is again made clear, Defendants state that they are not advocating that “the Court should dispense with the use of the indicator bacteria approach” or that “the current use of indicator bacteria be discontinued or disregarded.” *Response* at 18 and 16, respectively. On the contrary, Defendants recognize that indicator bacteria are currently used by regulatory agencies to conduct routine monitoring and screening of water bodies as part of their procedures for monitoring the quality of recreational waters. Defendants are not advocating the abandonment of the indicator bacteria paradigm for regulatory purposes. The point that Defendants have made with respect to the use of indicator bacteria – and the point that Plaintiffs refuse to acknowledge because it is fatal to their claim – is that the indicator paradigm cannot be used to establish causation and liability in the context of litigation because the presence of indicator bacteria tells no one anything about the source of the indicator bacteria, or even whether pathogens are present.

From a public health perspective, regulators use indicator bacteria because they need not know the source of the bacteria to make a reasonable regulatory decision that people should avoid recreating in certain waters. However, there is a critical distinction between *screening* for potential risk and assigning causal blame for creating a risk. Ignoring this distinction between screening for potential risk and identifying the cause of a particular risk, Dr. Teaf intends to

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testify that the water quality standards used by regulatory agencies to screen for potential contamination of Oklahoma waters equate to a “litmus test” for imposing liability on the poultry companies.<sup>2</sup> *See, e.g.*, Exh. 3 to *Motion*. However, the indicator bacteria paradigm does not, and was never intended to, identify sources of indicator bacteria so Dr. Teaf’s reliance on indicator bacteria to support his opinion on causation is improper and unscientific. To go to the next step, and assign causation to a particular source, additional testing and evidence are required. Plaintiffs have failed to conduct this additional source analysis by any reliable scientific means and thus, cannot meet their evidentiary burden of demonstrating the presence of any poultry-sourced pathogens in IRW waters.

Contrary to Plaintiffs’ baseless assertions, Defendants are not seeking to impose “a new and unarticulated standard” for assessing water quality. *Response* at 16. Defendants are simply seeking recognition of the evidentiary requirements applicable to every plaintiff in every case – *i.e.*, that the plaintiff must support his claims by a preponderance of evidence that establishes a causal link between the defendant and the alleged harm. Defendants’ argument that the presence of indicator bacteria does not establish any causal link to poultry litter is hardly novel, or part of some contrived “litigation driven science.” *Response* at 18. Defendants’ position has already been recognized by this Court and affirmed by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. *See Opinion*

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that Dr. Teaf’s desire to apply regulatory standards in litigation is in conflict with the Plaintiffs’ position on whether the Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) regulatory standards for “hold times” for water samples are applicable to litigation. In the Plaintiffs’ *Response* to Defendants’ *Motion to Exclude Expert Testimony Based on Bacterial Analyses Conducted in Violation of EPA, USGS, and Oklahoma Standards* (Doc. No. 2180), the Plaintiffs argue that “hold-time standards used for regulatory and compliance purposes are not applicable” to litigation. *Id.* at 10. The Plaintiffs’ theory is that they did not have to comply with the EPA’s 6-hour hold time standards because such standards are “for regulatory and compliance purposes” whereas the Plaintiffs’ sampling was for litigation purposes. *See id.* at 1. In sum, the Plaintiffs want to have it both ways by arguing that: (1) regulatory water quality standards apply

*and Order* at Doc. No. 1765 (“The State has not yet met its burden of proving that bacteria in the waters if the IRW are caused by the application of poultry litter rather than by other sources, including cattle manure and human septic systems.”) and *State v. Tyson Foods, Inc. et al*, 565 F.3d 769, 777 (10th Cir. 2009) (“...Oklahoma failed to link land-applied poultry litter and the bacteria in the IRW...Oklahoma’s inability to make this necessary evidentiary link meant that it could not establish that poultry litter may be a risk of harm in the IRW waterways.”).<sup>3</sup>

**C. Plaintiffs’ claim that Dr. Teaf relied upon a fate and transport analysis is contrary to the evidence, Dr. Teaf’s own testimony, and findings issued by this Court and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.**

Plaintiffs erroneously assert that Dr. Teaf relied upon a “fate and transport analysis” as one of the lines of evidence allegedly supporting his opinion. *Response* at 14. Dr. Teaf has already testified that there was no fate and transport to his quasi-TMDL work. *See* Exh. 1 hereto at 278:12-14 (Q: “So there was no fate and transport element to your work?” A: “No.”) and 280:9-12 (“I called it a loading analysis, but I did not do a fate and transport from the point of deposition to the water body.”). Moreover, none of the Plaintiffs’ other experts have conducted a fate and transport analysis. *See, e.g., State v. Tyson, et al*, 565 F.3d at 778 (“Oklahoma failed to conduct a fate and transport study to establish that any surviving bacteria from poultry litter

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when the Plaintiffs want to use them to support their case against Defendants; but, (2) regulatory water standards do not apply when the they are adverse to the Plaintiffs’ case against Defendants.

<sup>3</sup> Plaintiffs’ argument that the fact that other watersheds in Oklahoma are impaired by bacterial contamination or cyanobacteria is a “red herring” is similarly in conflict with prior opinions by this Court and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals holding that this fact is relevant and fatal to Plaintiffs’ claims. *See Opinion and Order* at Doc. No. 1765 (denying Plaintiffs’ motion for preliminary injunction because “[t]he record reflects levels of fecal bacteria at similar levels in rivers and streams throughout the State of Oklahoma, including waterways in whose watersheds the record does not evidence similar application of poultry waste.”) and *State v. Tyson, et al*, 565 F.3d at 778 (affirming this Court’s finding that “...IRW bacteria levels appear not to differ from bacteria levels in other bodies of water throughout Oklahoma, even where poultry farming is less common.”).

actually reached waters of the IRW.”); Exh. 4 to *Motion* at 301:21-302:10, 405:8-13, and 680:16-18, 688:24-699:17.

Consequently, Plaintiffs are incorrect in stating that “[a] fate and transport analysis was conducted” and incorrect in stating that the Plaintiffs have demonstrated the presence of poultry litter constituents “from the poultry houses, to the edge of the fields where it is applied, to its leaching in groundwater, and running off into streams, rivers, and finally...traveling to the waters and sediments of Lake Tenkiller.” *Response* at 14. There is simply no evidence to support this claim. On the contrary, the following summary of the Plaintiffs’ sampling data refutes Plaintiffs’ claim and Dr. Teaf’s opinions on such matters:<sup>4</sup>

<b>Targeted Bacteria</b>	<b>Sampled Media</b>	<b>Number of Samples</b>	<b>Number of Negative Samples or Samples Below Detection Limit</b>	<b>% Negative Samples</b>
<i>Salmonella</i>	Poultry litter	17	15	88% negative
<i>Salmonella</i>	Groundwater	77	77	100% negative
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Groundwater	1	1	100% negative
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Poultry litter	8	8	100% negative
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Soil	9	9	100% negative
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Surface water	302	300 <sup>5</sup>	99.3% negative
<i>Staphylococcus</i>	Poultry litter	17	17	100% negative
<i>Staphylococcus</i>	Soil	68	68	100% negative
<i>Staphylococcus</i>	Groundwater	77	76	98.7% negative

<sup>4</sup> See Exhs. 7A-7C to *Motion*.

<sup>5</sup> The two positive results do not support Dr. Teaf’s opinions regarding alleged risk from recreating in IRW waters because they were collected from edge-of-field samples and Dr. Teaf

Moreover, the Plaintiffs never even bothered to test for *E. coli* 0157; *Giardia*; or *Cryptosporidium*. Exh. 1 to *Motion* at 197:19-199:2; 217:12-17; and 286:8. Although each of these sample results is compelling evidence demonstrating the absence of evidentiary support for, and thus the unreliable nature of, Dr. Teaf's opinion that the land application of poultry litter is creating a risk to human health in the IRW, perhaps the strongest evidence demonstrating Dr. Teaf's flawed analysis is the fact that the State's sampling never found *Campylobacter* or *Staphylococcus* in poultry litter, and the fact that during the more than three years of sampling conducted by the Plaintiffs, the Plaintiffs only found *Salmonella* in 2 samples of poultry litter.<sup>6</sup>

**D. Dr. Teaf's opinion that pathogens such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* were present in negative samples cannot survive *Daubert* review because it is not capable of testing and because it has no known rate of error.**

Dr. Teaf intends to testify that although Plaintiffs' sampling failed to detect the presence of *Campylobacter* or *Salmonella* with any significant frequency, the Court and a jury should simply assume that such pathogens were actually present. Dr. Teaf opines that these pathogens were in a viable but non-culturable ("VBNC") state and thus, could not be detected. *See Response* at 17-18. However, as Defendants demonstrated in their *Motion*, multiple alternative testing options exist to detect the presence of such pathogens in water. *See id.* at 13-14. Plaintiffs do not acknowledge these available testing methodologies in their *Response*, much less attempt to explain why they failed to use them or why Dr. Teaf does not even know about them. *See Exh. 2 to Motion* at 21:6-22:8.

Instead, Plaintiffs maintain that Dr. Teaf should be allowed to tell a jury that although the Plaintiffs tested for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, and did not find them in the vast majority of

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has no evidence that any runoff from these edge-of-field sample sites ever traveled to recreational waters of the IRW. *See Exh. 2 to Motion* at 350:18-351:18.



the samples, the jury should ignore those negative test results and instead, assume that *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* were really there. Dr. Teaf's opinion on this issue is indefensible, unscientific, and incapable of being tested because it lies in the world of speculation and thus, outside the bounds of evidence. Dr. Teaf's opinion is the equivalent of someone attempting to detect the presence of a small object using a magnifying glass with a power of 10 and, upon failing to detect the object, just assuming that the object is there when all the while he could have used a nearby magnifying glass with a power of 1,000 to determine if the object was really there after all. Again, this analysis is not scientific and it cannot survive a *Daubert* analysis because there is no way to determine the error rate of such an approach – *i.e.*, one can neither prove nor disprove the assumption that pathogens were in samples despite the fact that the tests for them were almost uniformly negative.

**E. Dr. Teaf's opinions on alleged risk in the IRW are not supported by County incident reports of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*.**

Dr. Teaf claims that reported illnesses from *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in IRW Counties provide support for his opinion that the land application of poultry litter is creating a risk to human health in the IRW. *See Response* at 19-20. However, Dr. Teaf admits that the County Health Reports do not provide evidence as to whether the reported cases of bacterial illness were foodborne or waterborne (Exh. 2 to *Motion* at 150:24-151:7) and that they do not provide any information as to whether the reported incidents had anything to do with contact with water in the IRW (Exh. 1 to *Motion* at 163:13-164:15). Even the State's own health expert, Dr. Lawrence, agrees that these incident reports do not demonstrate whether there is a connection between the illnesses and the land-application of poultry litter. *See Exh. 10 to Motion* at 83:14-24).

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<sup>6</sup> Defendants also note that the Plaintiffs have failed to identify a single person who

Moreover, the Center for Disease Control has assessed the incidents of disease caused by *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in the United States and determined that 80% of all illness from *Campylobacter* and 95% of all illness from *Salmonella* are caused by food. *See* Exh. 9 to *Motion*. Dr. Teaf does not refute the CDC's findings or provide any evidentiary basis to conclude that the cause of reported illnesses in IRW Counties is any different than every other County in the United States. Instead, Plaintiffs assert that Dr. Teaf should be allowed to assume that contact with IRW waters is the cause of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* illnesses in IRW Counties because "it is something that one might expect to happen where the evidence demonstrates high bacteria levels in the surface and ground water." *Response* at 20. This Court and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals have already determined that the presence of generic indicator bacteria do not provide the necessary evidentiary link between the land application of poultry litter and any risk to human health. *See* Section B, *supra*. Therefore, Dr. Teaf's opinion that poultry litter is causing increased numbers of illnesses in the IRW is mere speculation and should be excluded by this Court.

**F. Dr. Teaf's sole claim of independent analysis in this matter – i.e., a quasi-TMDL assessment – fails to satisfy the EPA's requirements for conducting a bacteria TMDL.**

As support for his opinions regarding the source of bacteria in the IRW, Dr. Teaf claims to have conducted a quasi-TMDL analysis in accordance with "standard approaches" for conducting TMDL evaluations "at both the state and federal levels." *See Response* at 11-12 and Exh. 1 hereto at 281:8-17. Essentially, Dr. Teaf's quasi-TMDL analysis consisted of estimating the number of various animals in the IRW, multiplying those numbers by the estimated daily fecal coliform output for each animal, and using the product of those two variables as the

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became ill as a result of being exposed to any poultry-sourced pathogens in IRW waters.

estimated amount of fecal coliform entering the IRW for each type of animal. *See id.* at 272:15-278:13. Dr. Teaf's exclusive reliance upon fecal coliform in his quasi-TMDL assessment of IRW conditions, in the absence of a fate and transport study, is inconsistent with the EPA's TMDL guidance because EPA recognizes that *enterococci* appear to be a better predictor of risk to swimmers than fecal coliform because "the die-off rate of fecal coliform bacteria is much greater than the *enterococci* die-off rate." *See* Exh. 2 hereto at 2-4. In addition to failing to conduct a fate and transport analysis, Dr. Teaf's quasi-TMDL failed to consider the factors EPA considers to affect reasonable estimates of potential risks to human health – *i.e.*, waterbody conditions, bacteria exposure to sunlight, the age of the fecal deposit, etc. *See id.* at 2-7.

**G. Plaintiffs' *Response* fails to refute Defendants' demonstration that Dr. Teaf's opinions on alleged risks from cyanobacteria and DBPs are not based upon reliable evidence or scientific methodology.**

Plaintiffs' *Response* arguments regarding WHO guidelines for assessing risk from cyanobacteria and EPA risk-based screening levels for DBPs fail to cure the fundamental defect in Dr. Teaf's proposed testimony regarding an alleged risk from these substances – *i.e.*, Dr. Teaf has no evidence that poultry litter is the cause or source of any cyanobacteria or organic material allegedly causing increased levels of DBPs in IRW waters, and no evidentiary support for why he should be allowed to provide testimony requiring a jury to simply assume that poultry litter is the source of these substances in the IRW when other watersheds throughout the State exhibit similar levels of these substances in the absence of poultry activities. *See Response* at 20-25.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

For the reasons stated herein, and as more fully set forth in Defendants' *Motion*, Defendants respectfully request that the Court enter an order excluding the testimony of Dr. Teaf as requested in Defendants' *Motion*.

Respectfully submitted,

BY: /s/ Paula M. Buchwald  
Patrick M. Ryan, OBA # 7864  
Paula M. Buchwald, OBA # 20464  
RYAN, WHALEY & COLDIRON, P.C.  
119 North Robinson, Suite 900  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102  
(405) 239-6040 Telephone  
(405) 239-6766 Facsimile  
-and-

Michael R. Bond, *appearing pro hac vice*  
Erin Thompson, *appearing pro hac vice*  
KUTAK ROCK LLP  
The Three Sisters Building  
214 West Dickson Street  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701-5221  
(479) 973-4200 Telephone  
(479) 973-0007 Facsimile

-and-

Robert W. George, OBA #18562  
Bryan Burns, *appearing pro hac vice*  
TYSON FOODS, INC.  
2210 West Oaklawn Drive  
Springdale, Arkansas 72762  
(479) 290-4067 Telephone  
(479) 290-7967 Facsimile

-and-

Jay T. Jorgensen, *appearing pro hac vice*  
Thomas C. Green, *appearing pro hac vice*  
Mark D. Hopson, *appearing pro hac vice*  
Gordon D. Todd, *appearing pro hac vice*  
SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP  
1501 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005-1401  
(202) 736-8000 Telephone  
(202) 736-8711 Facsimile

Attorneys for Defendants Tyson Foods, Inc.,  
Tyson Chicken, Inc., Tyson Poultry, Inc., and  
Cobb-Vantress, Inc.

BY: /s/James M. Graves

(SIGNED BY FILING ATTORNEY WITH  
PERMISSION)

Woodson W. Bassett III  
Gary V. Weeks  
James M. Graves  
K.C. Dupps Tucker  
BASSETT LAW FIRM  
P.O. Box 3618  
Fayetteville, AR 72702-3618  
Telephone: (479) 521-9996  
Facsimile: (479) 521-9600

-and-

Randall E. Rose, OBA #7753  
George W. Owens  
OWENS LAW FIRM, P.C.  
234 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74119  
Telephone: (918) 587-0021  
Facsimile: (918) 587-6111

Attorneys for George's, Inc. and George's Farms,  
Inc.

BY: /s/ A. Scott McDaniel

(SIGNED BY FILING ATTORNEY WITH  
PERMISSION)

A. Scott McDaniel, OBA #16460  
Nicole M. Longwell, OBA #18771  
Philip D. Hixon, OBA #19121  
MCDANIEL, HIXON, LONGWELL  
& ACORD, PLLC  
320 South Boston Ave., Ste. 700  
Tulsa, OK 74103  
Telephone: (918) 382-9200  
Facsimile: (918) 382-9282

-and-

Sherry P. Bartley  
MITCHELL, WILLIAMS, SELIG,  
GATES & WOODYARD, PLLC  
425 W. Capitol Avenue, Suite 1800  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Telephone: (501) 688-8800  
Facsimile: (501) 688-8807

Attorneys for Peterson Farms, Inc.

BY: /s/ John R. Elrod  
(SIGNED BY FILING ATTORNEY WITH  
PERMISSION)

John R. Elrod  
Vicki Bronson, OBA #20574  
P. Joshua Wisley  
CONNER & WINTERS, L.L.P.  
211 East Dickson Street  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Telephone: (479) 582-5711  
Facsimile: (479) 587-1426

-and-

Bruce W. Freeman  
D. Richard Funk  
CONNER & WINTERS, L.L.P.  
4000 One Williams Center  
Tulsa, OK 74172  
Telephone: (918) 586-5711  
Facsimile: (918) 586-8553

Attorneys for Simmons Foods, Inc.

BY: /s/ Robert P. Redemann  
(SIGNED BY FILING ATTORNEY WITH  
PERMISSION)

Robert P. Redemann, OBA #7454  
PERRINE, MCGIVERN, REDEMANN,  
REID, BERRY & TAYLOR, P.L.L.C.  
Post Office Box 1710  
Tulsa, OK 74101-1710  
Telephone: (918) 382-1400  
Facsimile: (918) 382-1499

-and-

Robert E. Sanders  
Stephen Williams  
YOUNG WILLIAMS P.A.  
Post Office Box 23059  
Jackson, MS 39225-3059  
Telephone: (601) 948-6100  
Facsimile: (601) 355-6136

Attorneys for Cal-Maine Farms, Inc. and Cal-  
Maine Foods, Inc.

BY: /s/ John H. Tucker

(SIGNED BY FILING ATTORNEY WITH  
PERMISSION)

John H. Tucker, OBA #9110  
Theresa Noble Hill, OBA #19119  
RHODES, HIERONYMUS, JONES, TUCKER & GABLE,  
PLLC  
100 W. Fifth Street, Suite 400 (74103-4287)  
P.O. Box 21100  
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74121-1100  
Telephone: (918) 582-1173  
Facsimile: (918) 592-3390

-and-

Delmar R. Ehrich  
Bruce Jones  
Krisann C. Kleibacker Lee  
FAEGRE & BENSON LLP  
2200 Wells Fargo Center  
90 South Seventh Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402  
Telephone: (612) 766-7000  
Facsimile: (612) 766-1600

Attorneys for Cargill, Inc. and Cargill Turkey  
Production, LLC

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2009, I electronically transmitted the foregoing document to the Clerk of the Court using the ECF System for filing and transmittal of a Notice of Electronic Filing to the following ECF registrants:

W.A. Drew Edmondson, Attorney General  
Kelly H. Burch, Assistant Attorney General  
J. Trevor Hammons, Assistant Attorney General  
Daniel P. Lennington, Assistant Attorney General

[fc.docket@oag.state.ok.us](mailto:fc.docket@oag.state.ok.us)  
[Kelly.burch@oag.state.ok.us](mailto:Kelly.burch@oag.state.ok.us)  
[trevor.hammons@oag.state.ok.us](mailto:trevor.hammons@oag.state.ok.us)  
[daniel.lennington@oag.ok.us](mailto:daniel.lennington@oag.ok.us)

M. David Riggs  
Joseph P. Lennart  
Richard T. Garren  
Sharon K. Weaver  
Robert A. Nance  
D. Sharon Gentry  
*RIGGS, ABNEY, NEAL, TURPEN, ORBISON & LEWIS*

[driggs@riggsabney.com](mailto:driggs@riggsabney.com)  
[jlennart@riggsabney.com](mailto:jlennart@riggsabney.com)  
[rgarren@riggsabney.com](mailto:rgarren@riggsabney.com)  
[sweaver@riggsabney.com](mailto:sweaver@riggsabney.com)  
[rnance@riggsabney.com](mailto:rnance@riggsabney.com)  
[sgentry@riggsabney.com](mailto:sgentry@riggsabney.com)

Louis Werner Bullock  
Robert M. Blakemore  
*BULLOCK BULLOCK & BLAKEMORE*

[lbullock@bullock-blakemore.com](mailto:lbullock@bullock-blakemore.com)  
[bblakemore@bullock-blakemore.com](mailto:bblakemore@bullock-blakemore.com)

David P. Page  
*BELL LEGAL GROUP*

[dpage@riggsabney.com](mailto:dpage@riggsabney.com)

Frederick C. Baker  
Lee M. Heath  
Elizabeth C. Ward  
Elizabeth Claire Xidis  
William H. Harwold  
Ingrid L. Moll  
Jonathan D. Orent  
Michael G. Rousseau  
Fidelma L. Fitzpatrick  
*MOTLEY RICE, LLC*

[fbaker@motleyrice.com](mailto:fbaker@motleyrice.com)  
[lheath@motleyrice.com](mailto:lheath@motleyrice.com)  
[lward@motleyrice.com](mailto:lward@motleyrice.com)  
[cxidis@motleyrice.com](mailto:cxidis@motleyrice.com)  
[bnarwold@motleyrice.com](mailto:bnarwold@motleyrice.com)  
[imoll@motleyrice.com](mailto:imoll@motleyrice.com)  
[jorent@motleyrice.com](mailto:jorent@motleyrice.com)  
[mrousseau@motleyrice.com](mailto:mrousseau@motleyrice.com)  
[ffitzpatrick@motleyrice.com](mailto:ffitzpatrick@motleyrice.com)

**COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF, THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

Robert R. Redemann  
*PERRINE, McGIVERN, REDEMANN, REID, BARRY & TAYLOR, P.L.L.C.*

[rredemann@pmrlaw.net](mailto:rredemann@pmrlaw.net)

David C. Senger

[david@cgmllawok.com](mailto:david@cgmllawok.com)

Robert E. Sanders  
Edwin Stephens Williams

[rsanders@youngwilliams.com](mailto:rsanders@youngwilliams.com)  
[steve.williams@youngwilliams.com](mailto:steve.williams@youngwilliams.com)



*YOUNG WILLIAMS P.A.*

**COUNSEL FOR CAL-MAINE FARMS, INC. & CAL-MAINE FOODS**

John H. Tucker  
Theresa Noble Hill  
Colin Hampton Tucker  
Kerry R. Lewis  
*RHODES, HIERONYMUS, JONES, TUCKER & GABLE*

[jtucker@rhodesokla.com](mailto:jtucker@rhodesokla.com)  
[thill@rhodesokla.com](mailto:thill@rhodesokla.com)  
[ctucker@rhodesokla.com](mailto:ctucker@rhodesokla.com)  
[klewis@rhodesokla.com](mailto:klewis@rhodesokla.com)

Terry Wayen West  
*THE WEST LAW FIRM*

[terry@thewestlawfirm.com](mailto:terry@thewestlawfirm.com)

Delmar R. Ehrich  
Bruce Jones  
Dara D. Mann  
Krisann C. Kleibacker Lee  
Todd P. Walker  
Melissa C. Collins  
Christopher Harold Dolan  
Randall E. Kalnke  
*FAEGRE & BENSON, LLP*

[dehrich@faegre.com](mailto:dehrich@faegre.com)  
[bjones@faegre.com](mailto:bjones@faegre.com)  
[dmann@mckennalong.com](mailto:dmann@mckennalong.com)  
[kklee@faegre.com](mailto:kklee@faegre.com)  
[twalker@faegre.com](mailto:twalker@faegre.com)  
[mcollins@faegre.com](mailto:mcollins@faegre.com)  
[cdolan@faegre.com](mailto:cdolan@faegre.com)  
[rkalnke@faegre.com](mailto:rkalnke@faegre.com)

**COUNSEL FOR CARGILL, INC. & CARGILL TURKEY PRODUCTION, LLC**

James Martin Graves  
Gary V. Weeks  
Woody Bassett  
K.C. Dupps Tucker  
Earl "Buddy" Chadick  
*BASSETT LAW FIRM*

[jgraves@bassettlawfirm.com](mailto:jgraves@bassettlawfirm.com)  
[gweeks@bassettlawfirm.com](mailto:gweeks@bassettlawfirm.com)  
[wbassett@bassettlawfirm.com](mailto:wbassett@bassettlawfirm.com)  
[kctucker@bassettlawfirm.com](mailto:kctucker@bassettlawfirm.com)  
[bchadick@bassettlawfirm.com](mailto:bchadick@bassettlawfirm.com)

George W. Owens  
Randall E. Rose  
*OWENS LAW FIRM*

[gwo@owenslawfirm.com](mailto:gwo@owenslawfirm.com)  
[rer@owenslawfirm.com](mailto:rer@owenslawfirm.com)

**COUNSEL FOR GEORGE'S INC. & GEORGE'S FARMS, INC.**

A. Scott McDaniel  
Nicole Longwell  
Phillip Hixon  
Craig A. Mirkes  
*McDANIEL, HIXON, LONGWELL & ACORD, PLLC*

[smcdaniel@mhla-law.com](mailto:smcdaniel@mhla-law.com)  
[nlogwell@mhla-law.com](mailto:nlogwell@mhla-law.com)  
[phixon@mhla-law.com](mailto:phixon@mhla-law.com)  
[cmirkes@mhla-law.com](mailto:cmirkes@mhla-law.com)

Sherry P. Bartley  
*MITCHELL, WILLIAMS, SELIG, GATES & WOODYARD, PLLC*  
**COUNSEL FOR PETERSON FARMS, INC.**

[sbartley@mwschw.com](mailto:sbartley@mwschw.com)

John Elrod  
Vicki Bronson  
P. Joshua Wisley  
Bruce W. Freeman  
D. Richard Funk  
*CONNOR & WINTERS, LLP*  
**COUNSEL FOR SIMMONS FOODS, INC.**

[jelrod@cwlaw.com](mailto:jelrod@cwlaw.com)  
[vbronson@cwlaw.com](mailto:vbronson@cwlaw.com)  
[jwisley@cwlaw.com](mailto:jwisley@cwlaw.com)  
[bfreeman@cwlaw.com](mailto:bfreeman@cwlaw.com)  
[rfunk@cwlaw.com](mailto:rfunk@cwlaw.com)

Stephen L. Jantzen  
Paula M. Buchwald  
Patrick M. Ryan  
*RYAN WHALEY COLDIRON & SHANDY*

[sjantzen@ryanwhaley.com](mailto:sjantzen@ryanwhaley.com)  
[pbuchwald@ryanwhaley.com](mailto:pbuchwald@ryanwhaley.com)  
[pryan@ryanwhaley.com](mailto:pryan@ryanwhaley.com)

Mark D. Hopson  
Jay Thomas Jorgensen  
Timothy K. Webster  
Thomas C. Green  
Gordon D. Todd  
*SIDLEY, AUSTIN, BROWN & WOOD LLP*

[mhopson@sidley.com](mailto:mhopson@sidley.com)  
[jjorgensen@sidley.com](mailto:jjorgensen@sidley.com)  
[twebster@sidley.com](mailto:twebster@sidley.com)  
[tcgreen@sidley.com](mailto:tcgreen@sidley.com)  
[gtodd@sidley.com](mailto:gtodd@sidley.com)

Michael R. Bond  
Erin W. Thompson  
Dustin R. Darst  
*KUTAK ROCK, LLP*

[michael.bon@kutakrock.com](mailto:michael.bon@kutakrock.com)  
[erin.thompson@kutakrock.com](mailto:erin.thompson@kutakrock.com)  
[dustin.darst@kutakrock.com](mailto:dustin.darst@kutakrock.com)

Robert George  
L. Bryan Burns  
*TYSON FOODS, INC.*

[robert.george@tyson.com](mailto:robert.george@tyson.com)  
[bryan.burns@tyson.com](mailto:bryan.burns@tyson.com)

**COUNSEL FOR TYSON FOODS, INC., TYSON POULTRY, INC., TYSON CHICKEN, INC., & COBB-VANTRESS, INC.**

R. Thomas Lay  
*KERR, IRVIND, RHODES & ABLES*

[rt@kiralaw.com](mailto:rt@kiralaw.com)

Jennifer Stockton Griffin  
David Gregory Brown  
Frank M. Evans, III  
*LATHROP & GAGE, L.C.*

[jgriffin@lathropgage.com](mailto:jgriffin@lathropgage.com)  
[dbrown@lathropgage.com](mailto:dbrown@lathropgage.com)  
[fevans@lathropgage.com](mailto:fevans@lathropgage.com)

**COUNSEL FOR WILLOW BROOK FOODS, INC.**

Robin S. Conrad  
*NATIONAL CHAMBER LITIGATION CENTER*

[rconrad@uschamber.com](mailto:rconrad@uschamber.com)

Gary S. Chilton [gchilton@holladaychilton.com](mailto:gchilton@holladaychilton.com)  
HOLLADAY, CHILTON AND DEGIUSTI, PLLC  
**COUNSEL FOR US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AMERICAN  
TORT REFORM ASSOCIATION**

D. Kenyon Williams, Jr. [kwilliams@hallestill.com](mailto:kwilliams@hallestill.com)  
Michael D. Graves [mgraves@hallestill.com](mailto:mgraves@hallestill.com)  
*HALL, ESTILL, HARDWICK, GABLE, GOLDEN & NELSON*  
**COUNSEL FOR POULTRY GROWERS/INTERESTED  
PARTIES/POULTRY PARTNERS, INC.**

Richard Ford [richard.ford@crowedunlevy.com](mailto:richard.ford@crowedunlevy.com)  
LeAnne Burnett [leanne.burnett@crowedunlevy.com](mailto:leanne.burnett@crowedunlevy.com)  
*CROWE & DUNLEVY*  
**COUNSEL FOR OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU, INC.**

Kendra Akin Jones, Assistant Attorney General [Kendra.Jones@arkansasag.gov](mailto:Kendra.Jones@arkansasag.gov)  
Charles L. Moulton, Sr. Assistant Attorney General [Charles.Moulton@arkansasag.gov](mailto:Charles.Moulton@arkansasag.gov)  
**COUNSEL FOR STATE OF ARKANSAS AND ARKANSAS NATIONAL  
RESOURCES COMMISSION**

Mia Vahlberg [mvahlberg@gablelaw.com](mailto:mvahlberg@gablelaw.com)  
*GABLE GOTWALS*

James T. Banks [jtbanks@hhlaw.com](mailto:jtbanks@hhlaw.com)  
Adam J. Siegel [ajsiegel@hhlaw.com](mailto:ajsiegel@hhlaw.com)  
*HOGAN & HARTON, LLP*  
**COUNSEL FOR NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL; U.S. POULTRY AND  
EGG ASSOCIATION & NATIONAL TURKEY FEDERAL**

John D. Russell [jrussell@fellerssnider.com](mailto:jrussell@fellerssnider.com)  
*FELLERS, SNIDER, BLANKENSHIP, BAILEY & TIPPENS, PC*

William A. Waddell, Jr. [waddell@fec.net](mailto:waddell@fec.net)  
David E. Choate [dchoate@fec.net](mailto:dchoate@fec.net)  
**COUNSEL FOR ARKANSAS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

Barry Greg Reynolds [reynolds@titushillis.com](mailto:reynolds@titushillis.com)  
Jessica E. Rainey [jrainey@titushillis.com](mailto:jrainey@titushillis.com)  
*TITUS, HILLIS, REYNOLDS, LOVE, DICKMAN & MCCALMON*

Nikka Baugh Jordon [njordan@lightfootlaw.com](mailto:njordan@lightfootlaw.com)  
William S. Cox III [wcox@lightfootlaw.com](mailto:wcox@lightfootlaw.com)

**COUNSEL FOR AMERICAN FARM BUREAU AND NATIONAL  
CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION**

and I further certify that a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing will be mailed via regular mail through the United States Postal Service, postage properly paid, on the following who are not registered participants of the ECF System:

**ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF**

C. Miles Tolbert  
**SECRETARY OF THE ENVIRONMENT**  
State of Oklahoma  
3800 North Classen  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Cherri House  
P.O. Box 1097  
Stilwell, OK 74960

David Gregory Brown  
Lathrop & Gage LC  
314 E. High Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Donna S. Parker  
34996 S 502 Road  
Park Hill, OK 74451

Doris Mares  
14943 SE 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Choctaw, OK 73020-7007

G. Craig Heffinton  
20144 W. Sixshooter Road  
Cookson, OK 74427

John & Virginia W. Adair Family Trust  
Rt. 2 Box 1160  
Stilwell, OK 74960

Cary Silverman  
Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP  
600 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW Ste 800  
Washington D.C. 20005-2004

Dustin McDaniel  
Office of the Attorney General  
323 Center Street  
Suite 200  
Little Rock, AR 72201-2610

George R. Stubblefield  
HC-66, Box 19-12  
Proctor, OK 74457

Gordon W. Clinton  
23605 S. Goodnight Lane  
Welling, OK 74471

Jerry M. Maddux  
Selby Connor Maddux Janer  
P.O. Box Z  
Bartlesville, OK 74005-5025

Thomas C. Green  
Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP  
1501 K Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Victor E. Schwartz  
Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP  
600 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20005-2004

William House  
P.O. Box 1097  
Stilwell, OK 74960

Jim Baby  
RR 2, Box 1711  
Westville, OK 74965

Jonathan D. Orent  
Motley Rice LLC  
321 S. Main Street  
Providence, RI 02940

Justin Allen  
Office of the Attorney General  
323 Center Street  
Suite 200  
Little Rock, Ark 72001-2610

Marjorie Garman  
19031 US Hwy 412  
Colcord, Ok 74338-3861

Melissa C. Collins  
Faegre & Benson  
1700 Lincoln Street, Suite 3200  
Denver, CO 80203

Richard E. Parker  
34996 S. 502 Rd  
Park Hill, OK 74451

Robin L. Wofford  
Rt. 2, Box 370  
Watts, OK 749764

Steven B. Randall  
58185 Country Road 658  
Kansas, OK 74347

Susann Clinton  
23605 Goodnight Lane  
Welling, OK 7447

J.D. Strong  
Secretary of the Environment  
State of Oklahoma  
3800 North Classen  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

/s/ Paula M. Buchwald  
Paula M. Buchwald